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Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGRAVED AND GILDED ARMOR FOR MAN AND HORSE. PROBABLY MADE FOR THE
SIEUR GOURDON DE GENOUILHAC (1466-1546) DATED 1527

Recent Art Acquisitions in American Public Collections

BY GREGORY MACDONALD

THE Metropolitan Museum of Art has acquired an extraordinary fine Sixteenth century engraved and gilded armor for man and horse believed to have been made for the Sieur Jacques Gourdon de Genouilhac, or "Galiot" (1466-1546), a distinguished courtier and noted warrior attached to the Court of Louis XII and of Francis I. The suit was completed in 1527 and is dated. The complete condition of this armor, heavily gilded, richly decorated with engraved ornament, but still Gothic in style, without a fault, with no modern pieces inset, with the exception of the roundels for helmet and certain finger scales of one gauntlet leaves one of the world's masterpieces of the armorer's art. Not only is the suit complete, but it has with it a series of *pieces de renfort*, including a bridle gauntlet, a locking gauntlet, a reinforcing plate for the plastron with a huge lance rest, a supplemental plate for the abdomen, and a rare defense worn within the breastplate. In describing the suit Major Bashford Dean, Curator of Armor, wrote, "Its elements, moreover, are in extraordinary condition; their original straps are in many cases preserved, their rivets neatly tinned to protect them from the perspiration of the wearer; but, rarest of all, the surface of the armor is in excellent state—at certain points the gilding is practically as fresh as when it left the hands of its maker. The etched ornamentation, it is worth noting, while occurring everywhere on the suit, was curiously shallow; for those were days when the armorer took pains not to allow the strength of the armor to be injured by the technical processes used in decoration. It is satisfactory to find that the armor is dated, the number 1527 occurring in the ornamentation no less than three

times. From this we conclude that it is later than the Tower suit by from twelve to fifteen years—which we would hardly have believed had the date not been recorded, since it retains many archaic features, among others helmet and gauntlets with roundels, unguessed breastplate globose pauldrons, and outrolled



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

ENGRAVED AND GILDED ARMOR FOR MAN AND HORSE,
1527



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

A DIORITE FIGURE OF THE LIONESS-HEADED SEKHMET, EGYPTIAN, XVIII DYNASTY (1411-1375 B. C.) RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

borders of plates. Furthermore, it recalls the Tower suit in its proportions; it was made for a man of tall stature and generous girth. I recall that the span of the calf of the leg of the armor for the Englishman was $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches: in the present suit it is smaller by only one inch. The same huge shoulders are there and the heavy trunk. Indeed, when I came to have photographs made of the armor and wished it shown on a living model I had difficulty to find in the Museum a man of suitable size to wear it. As shown on page 211, it is worn by our largest attendant, who is over 6 feet high and weighs 225 pounds. Our armor, therefore, adds to the evidence that men of great physique could be found in olden times. Further examination of the armor showed clearly that it was made by a person having extraordinary technical skill. He gave his plates broad, sweeping curves; he made his borders and ridges crisply; and he finished his details, such as hooks, pinions, buckles, with a precision and delicateness which are rare even in the best specimens. . . . As one looks at the armor, one wonders where it was made and by whom it was worn. The first question may not now be solved; the second may be given a very probable, if not a final answer. The armor, we believe from its type of decoration, is either Italian or French. As a single argument in favor of an Italian origin we observe that in its decoration it shows at several points the arms of the Visconti (Milan)—a child in the article of being swallowed by a serpent. On the other hand, we recall that in general this ornament is not an uncommon one, and that it may here have been used merely as a motif in decoration, like the mermaids and mermen which appear nearby, or elephants, castles, owls, amorini, and seraphim, or the labors of Hercules. Besides, we know no specimen of Italian workmanship which resembles the present one, and the type of ornament impresses us as French—Francis I; and its affinities are even rather on the Spanish side of France than on the Italian; thus the arm



EIGHT COLOSSAL EGYPTIAN DIORITE SEATED FIGURES OF SEKHMET, THE LIONESS-HEADED GODDESS OF WAR AND STRIFE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

pieces show a cruious elbow guard well known in Spanish armor of early date."

This armor was in the possession of a family dwelling in a castle near the Spanish border. There the armor had rested for centuries and the dry mountain air of the region preserved it in a degree so near its original condition.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has also recently received as a gift from Mr. Henry Walters a most important series of seven Egyptian colossal seated figure of the lioness-headed Goddess of War and Strife, Sekhmet, dating from the reign of Amenhotep III, of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1411-1375 B. C.) The Museum Bulletin tells us that these statues found their way to England not long before or after the year 1830, where they have since remained, latterly in the possession of the late Lord Amherst of Hackney, whose important collection of Egyptian antiquities was installed in his country-seat, Didlington Hall, Norfolk. Arrangements for the purchase of the statues for the Museum had been concluded in the summer of 1914 just before the outbreak of the war.



HEAD OF THE SEATED FIGURE OF SEKHMET